

1 **Initiation of ensemble kinesin-3 motility is regulated by the rigidity of** 2 **cargo-motor attachment**

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11 **Abstract**

12 Intracellular cargo transport is powered by molecular motors that move on their
13 respective filamentous tracks. A key component in this process is the tether between
14 cargo and motor, which is often connected by long slender coiled-coils. Several studies
15 have identified mechanisms that regulate cargo transport and can be broadly categorized
16 into regulation of the motor ATPase activity by autoinhibition, cargo adapters and
17 modifications in the cytoskeletal tracks. The regulatory effects of cargo-motor linkers
18 have been described in kinesin-3 subfamily motors. However, the effects of cargo-motor
19 linker rigidity on ensemble cargo transport has not been explored. Here we have built a
20 DNA origami scaffold, which can be tethered with multiple kinesin-3 motors using either
21 single or double-stranded DNA linkages, mimicking rigid versus flexible cargo-motor
22 linkages. Using this system, we show that regardless of the motor numbers attached to the
23 cargo, only linkers with a lesser degree of freedom allow motors to engage with
24 microtubule tracks. Together, our work identifies that the rigidity of cargo-motor linkages
25 influences motor motility. This opens up the possibilities to identify new factors that can
26 influence the rigidity of cargo-motor linkages that in turn can regulate intracellular cargo
27 transport.

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31 **Introduction**

32 Molecular motors belonging to the kinesin superfamily require three important
33 components for their cellular function; the motor domain, coiled-coil helices and the
34 terminal cargo binding domain (Sweeney and Holzbaur, 2018). The kinesin motor
35 domain interacts with the microtubules, which in turn stimulates ATP turnover and the
36 ATP hydrolyzing activity is converted into the mechanical force required for motility.
37 Modulation of ATPase activity (Gennerich and Vale, 2009), sequestration of the motor
38 domain (Hammond et al., 2010; Imanishi et al., 2006; Toropova et al., 2017; Ren et al.,
39 2018) and modifications in the microtubule tracks (Sirajuddin et al., 2014; Lessard et al.,
40 2019; McKenney et al., 2016; Monroy et al., 2020) are well-known regulatory
41 mechanisms that govern kinesin motility. The cargo binding domain of a typical kinesin
42 motor is located at the distal end of the motor domain. In many cases, the sequestration of
43 motor domain is mediated by the cargo binding domain leading to an autoinhibitory state.
44 This autoinhibition can be relieved by cognate cargo adapters, thereby ensuring fidelity
45 and minimizing futile ATPase cycles during intracellular transport (Siddiqui and Straube,
46 2017). The third component in kinesin molecular motors are the tethers that connect
47 motor domain and cargo binding domain. These tethers are often dimeric coiled-coil
48 helices that span several hundreds of amino acids, thus rendering a single kinesin
49 molecular motor dimeric in nature (Hirokawa et al., 2009b). The slender coiled coil
50 domain also contains several breaks making them flexible, thereby providing several
51 degrees of freedom to the kinesin motor during cargo transport.

52
53 Among the kinesin superfamily of motors, members of the kinesin-3 subfamily such as
54 KIF1A, KIF13B and KIF16 are known to be regulated by the flexible parts of the coiled
55 coil domain (Soppina et al., 2014). Using single molecule and engineered kinesin-3
56 motors it was inferred that the flexibility of the hinge region between NC and CC1
57 domains is important for dimerization and subsequent motility of kinesin-3 motors
58 (Soppina et al., 2014; Huo et al., 2012). The dimerization requirement for kinesin-3
59 processive motility was a contentious notion (Okada and Hirokawa, 1999; Hirokawa et
60 al., 2009a), which has been sufficiently addressed by several independent studies
61 (Soppina et al., 2014; Hammond et al., 2009; Tomishige et al., 2002). The current model

62 suggests that dimerization of kinesin-3 motors leads to super-processive motility i.e.,
63 their ability to walk long distances along the microtubules (Soppina et al., 2014;
64 Scarabelli et al., 2015; Siddiqui and Straube, 2017). The super-processive property of
65 kinesin-3 motors have been attributed to the lysine rich loop (K-loop) in the motor
66 domain (Soppina and Verhey, 2014). The basic charge of K-loop mediates electrostatic
67 interaction with the acidic carboxy-terminal tails of tubulin, thus increasing the
68 processive motility of kinesin-3 motors. A recent study has also shown that
69 multimerization of kinesin-3 monomers can also result in cargo transport (Schimert et al.,
70 2019). While tremendous progress has been achieved in understanding kinesin-3 motors
71 and their motility at the single-molecule level, the regulatory aspects of multiple kinesin-
72 3 motors have not been explored. In fact, the conventional method to study molecular
73 motors and their regulation has been an endeavor that majorly involves purified
74 molecular motors and studying them at the single-molecule level. However, molecular
75 motors often work in teams with varying motor ensemble numbers. To study motor
76 ensemble properties and probe the importance of the cargo-motor linker rigidity in
77 ensemble conditions we designed a synthetic scaffold system. The DNA origami scaffold
78 developed in this study can accommodate up to 28 motors, far exceeding the ensemble
79 numbers achieved in previous studies (Toropova et al., 2017; Derr et al., 2012; Driller-
80 Colangelo et al., 2016; Hariadi et al., 2015b; Furuta et al., 2013). Using this system, we
81 probed the role of motor-cargo linkers and found that the initiation of kinesin-3 ensemble
82 motility is dictated by the flexibility of the linkers. Thus, the DNA origami tool described
83 here becomes a robust system that can be extended to study regulatory mechanisms of
84 other molecular motors in their ensemble state.

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91 **Results**

92 **Design and validation of 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold**

93 Molecular motors have been extensively studied at the single molecule level, however
94 while performing their cellular functions they often work in ensembles. Few studies have
95 created synthetic DNA scaffolds to study motor ensembles and so far, the systems that
96 exist can assemble maximum of 6 motors with regular spacing (Derr et al., 2012; Hariadi
97 et al., 2015b). To expand the capabilities in studying motor ensembles, here we adapted a
98 DNA origami scaffold that was designed earlier (Bui et al., 2010). The DNA origami
99 scaffold used in this study is 400nm long with 6 helix bundles (6HB-400nm) (Methods)
100 (Figure 1A & Supplementary Figure 1). The 6HB-400nm scaffold has been designed to
101 accommodate up to 28 oligonucleotide-overhangs (called handles) in a linear stretch,
102 each handle is spaced ~14nm apart (Supplementary Figure 1). The 6HB-400nm scaffold
103 was validated to confirm its structure and occupancy of oligonucleotide handles using
104 anti-handles conjugated with fluorescent molecules and motors at helix 1
105 & 5 and helix 2 respectively (Methods) (Supplementary Table 1 & Supplementary Figure
106 2A-D). For the protein attachment to the 6HB-400nm scaffold we designed two versions;
107 A 40 and 20 base single-stranded oligonucleotide (anti-handle) that is covalently linked
108 to the tail end of kinesin through SNAP-tag (Methods) (Supplementary Figure 3A & 3B).
109 The 20 base oligonucleotides anti-handle is fully complementary to the handle sites
110 emanating from the 6HB-400nm scaffold mimicking the rigid linker (Supplementary
111 Figure 3C). In the case of 40 base oligonucleotides anti-handle, the complementarity is
112 restricted only towards 20 basepairs at the 5' of the handle sites rendering them as
113 flexible linkers. On the other hand, the handle oligonucleotides that are complementary to
114 the anti-handles are also 40 base long of which 20 base towards the 3'/5' end (i.e.,
115 towards the DNA scaffold) remain single-stranded (Supplementary Figure 3C). From
116 hereafter we refer the 20 and 40 oligonucleotides protein-DNA scaffold attachment
117 linkers as rigid and flexible linkers respectively (Supplementary Figure 3C).
118
119 Next, we established motor motility assays assessing the feasibility of the 6HB-400nm
120 scaffold to study the ensemble motor behavior. Briefly, KIF1A motors were covalently
121 linked to single-stranded DNA oligonucleotides (flexible and rigid anti-handles) that are

122 complementary to the handles present in the 6HB-400nm scaffold (Methods) (Figure 1C
123 and Supplementary Figure 3A & 3B). To visualize the 6HB-400nm scaffolds in our
124 motility assays, we labelled them using six fluorescent oligonucleotides that were
125 attached to the fluorescent handles at helix 1 & 5 (Methods) (Figure 1A, Supplementary
126 Figure 1 & Supplementary Table 1). In our motility assays, we compared the 6HB-
127 400nm:28 KIF1A motors (ensemble motors) motility against individual KIF1A motors
128 (Methods). Our results show that the velocity of 6HB-400nm:28 KIF1A ensemble and
129 single KIF1A motors are $1.27 \pm 0.39 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$ and $1.08 \pm 0.29 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$ respectively (Figure 1D
130 & 1E) (Supplementary Table 2). In the case of processivity, the 6HB-400nm:16 KIF1A
131 ensembles and single KIF1A motors are near identical (Figure 1F) (Supplementary Table
132 1). From this experiment we conclude that the 6HB-400nm scaffold can serve as a tool
133 for characterizing motor ensemble properties.

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135 **Motility properties of KIF1A motor ensembles**

136 Full-length Kinesin-3 motors can exist as monomeric units and homodimers in cells,
137 single-molecule studies have suggested that the dimeric KIF1A motors are super-
138 processive (Soppina et al., 2014; Tomishige et al., 2002). However, a quantitative
139 comparison of monomer versus dimer KIFA ensembles is yet to be characterized.
140 Moreover, the flexibility of cargo-motor linkers in an ensemble setting has not been
141 explored. In order to test this, we compared the ensemble motility properties of dimeric
142 and monomeric KIF1A tethered to 6HB-400nm scaffold, hereafter called as 6HB-400nm
143 monomer KIFA and dimer KIF1A ensembles respectively (Methods) (Supplementary
144 Figure 3A). We chose four different ensemble numbers in this study; 28, 16, 8 and 4
145 motor attachment handle sites, which we hereafter refer to as 28H, 16H, 8H and 4H
146 respectively (Methods). The 6HB-400nm:KIF1A dimer ensembles with varying handle
147 sites and linkers were analyzed in an agarose gel to confirm the extent of DNA:motor
148 complex formation (Methods) (Figure 1C, Supplementary Figure 3E & 3F).

149

150 From the motility assays, we could record individual 6HB-400nm:KIF1A ensembles
151 moving along the microtubules, regardless of the KIF1A oligomeric state, ensemble
152 number and the nature of linkers. Upon quantification of velocity and processivity values,

153 deviations between different 6HB-400nm:KIF1A ensembles began to emerge (Figure 2 &
154 Supplementary Figure 4 & 5). The velocities within monomer and dimer KIF1A
155 ensemble cohorts does not change with motor number. However, the velocity between
156 monomer and dimer KIF1A rigid ensembles are two-fold different; for 6HB-400nm: 4-
157 28H dimer and monomer KIF1A rigid ensembles the average velocity is $\sim 2 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$ and
158 $\sim 0.9 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$ respectively (Figure 2A, Supplementary Figure 4 & Supplementary Table 2).
159 Compared to the KIF1A monomer rigid ensembles the flexible cohort exhibited two-fold
160 reduction in velocity (Figure 2A, Supplementary Figure 4 & Supplementary Table 2). In
161 contrast, the processivity values follow similar trend between monomer rigid, monomer
162 flexible and dimer rigid ensembles (Figure 2B, Supplementary Figure 4 & Supplementary
163 Table 2). A puzzling phenomenon here is the poor processivity of KIF1A ensembles
164 below 16H. The 6HB-400nm-4H and 8H KIF1A dimer processivity is $4.96 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}$ and
165 $4.95 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}$ respectively. We attribute this low processivity of 6HB-400nm-4H & 8H
166 KIF1A dimer ensembles to the high magnesium concentration used in our motility
167 assays. High magnesium levels are required to overcome the magnesium quenching
168 property of 6HB-400nm DNA scaffolds and therefore balancing the requirement of
169 Mg^{2+} ions for motor ATPase activity (Methods). Indeed, when high magnesium is used
170 in motility assays the single dimeric KIF1A also exhibits poor processivity of 3.46 ± 0.01
171 μm (Figure 1E & Supplementary Table 2). We also observed that the high magnesium
172 induced low processivity can be overcome by higher motor ensembles. For example, the
173 processivity of 6HB-400nm dimer KIF1A rigid 16H and 28H ensembles are 12.2 ± 0.01
174 μm and $7.2 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}$ respectively and is similar to the dimeric KIF1A processivity
175 $9.8 \pm 0.01 \mu\text{m}$ (Supplementary Table 2).

176

177 In summary, the velocity of KIF1A ensembles remains unaffected regardless of the motor
178 number and the processivity of KIF1A ensembles improves as the motor number
179 increases.

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181 **Comparative analysis of flexible versus rigid cargo-motor linkers**

182 While the velocity and processivity of flexible versus rigid cargo-motor linkers in
183 ensembles remain largely unchanged, we observed reduced number of 6HB-400nm

184 KIF1A monomer ensembles with flexible linkers encountering the microtubule
185 (Supplementary Movie 1). To gain more insights, we qualitatively assessed the ability of
186 flexible and rigid linked 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles binding microtubules
187 in the absence of ATP, a microtubule strong binding condition called rigor-state
188 (Methods). The rigor-state assays exemplify our observation that the 6HB-400nm KIF1A
189 monomer ensembles with flexible linkers show reduced binding to the microtubules
190 (Figure 3). In order to systematically probe the cargo-motor linkers, we additionally
191 generated linkers that have single-stranded stretch at the either end of scaffold or motor
192 tail, called intermediate flexible linkers (Methods) (Supplementary Table 1). In the rigor-
193 state assays the 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles linked with intermediate
194 flexible linkers also showed a marked decrease in microtubule binding (Figure 3). The
195 reduced binding of 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles is a recurring phenomenon
196 regardless of motor number sampled in our assays (Figure 3 & Supplementary Figure 6).
197
198 Next, we reasoned whether the reduced microtubule-binding ability of 6HB-400nm
199 KIF1A monomer ensembles with flexible linkers could be rescued. For which we
200 designed rescue oligonucleotides that can basepair with the single-stranded stretches in
201 the flexible linkers (Methods) (Figure 3, Supplementary Figure 6 & Supplementary Table
202 1). The rigor-state assays were performed in the absence and presence of rescue
203 oligonucleotides for flexible 6HB-400nm monomer KIF1A ensembles (Methods).
204 Remarkably, the microtubule-binding of 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles with
205 the flexible linkers was restored upon the addition of rescue oligonucleotides (Figure 3).
206 The microtubule-binding rescue was observed with 16H also, however, the effects were
207 more pronounced with 8H (Figure 3 & Supplementary Figure 6). To establish whether
208 the rescue is specific, we performed the rigor-state rescue experiments in the presence of
209 a scrambled oligonucleotides (Supplementary Table 1). In comparison to the rescue
210 oligonucleotides that have complementarity to the flexible linkers the scrambled
211 oligonucleotides did not show any improvement in microtubule-binding of 6HB-400nm
212 KIF1A monomer ensembles (Figure 3 & Supplementary Figure 6). These experiments
213 conclusively demonstrate that the microtubule-binding of KIF1A monomer ensembles
214 can be regulated by the stiffness of the cargo-motor linker.

215

216 **Initiation of KIF1A ensemble motility is sensitive to the rigidity of DNA linkers**

217 The above rescue experiments were performed in the rigor-state. To assess the functional
218 significance of cargo-motor linker flexibility, we next performed experiments in the
219 presence of ATP (Methods). In addition to the velocity and processivity values, we
220 measured the binding frequency of flexible 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles
221 with and without the rescue oligonucleotides (Methods). The velocity and processivity
222 values of flexible 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles do not change upon addition
223 of rescue oligonucleotides (Figure 4A, Supplementary Figure 7 & Supplementary Table
224 1), similar to our results with flexible versus rigid linkers (Figure 2). However, we
225 observed a marked decrease in landing frequency with the flexible 6HB-400nm KIF1A
226 monomer ensembles (Figure 4B). The landing frequency rate of flexible 6HB-400nm 4H,
227 8H and 16H KIF1A ensembles are 0.004, 0.001 and 0.007 $\mu\text{m}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ respectively. Similar
228 to the rigor-state experiments, we performed the motility experiments with flexible 6HB-
229 400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles in the presence of rescue oligonucleotides
230 (Methods). The number of flexible 6HB-400nm KIF1A monomer ensemble particles
231 moving on the microtubules markedly increases with rescue oligonucleotides
232 (Supplementary Movie 1). Upon quantification, the landing-frequency of flexible 6HB-
233 400nm KIF1A monomer ensembles significantly increases with the addition of rescue
234 oligonucleotides in the motility assays (Figure 4B & Supplementary Figure 7). The
235 landing frequencies of rescued 6HB-400nm 4H, 8H and 16H KIF1A monomer ensembles
236 are 0.011, 0.073 and 0.059 $\mu\text{m}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ respectively. We also observed the improvement in
237 landing frequency is specific to the rescue oligonucleotides that are complimentary to the
238 single-stranded DNA linkers. Combinedly these experiments suggest that the initiation of
239 KIF1A ensembles motility is sensitive to the rigidity of the linkers between the
240 6HB400nm scaffold and motors.

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246 **Discussion**

247 Majority of the motor regulation studies have been performed using purified components
248 of single or individual motor proteins. There are a few exceptions where the tug-of-war
249 between two opposing motors have been described (Derr et al., 2012; Hariadi et al.,
250 2015b; Toropova et al., 2017; Driller-Colangelo et al., 2016; Furuta et al., 2013).
251 However, the regulatory aspects of ensemble motors have been poorly described, for
252 instance the effects of cargo-motor linker flexibility towards ensemble kinesin-3 motility
253 is unknown. Similarly, the ensemble motor experiments so far has been limited to DNA
254 origami scaffolds with six motors. On the other hand, DNA scaffolds that can
255 accommodate hundreds of motors has been described. However, it can only control the
256 spacing between each motor thus limiting the ability to control the motor ensemble
257 numbers (Hariadi et al., 2015a). Molecular motors that work together have their ensemble
258 number in varying orders. For example, the motor ensemble numbers involved in the
259 intracellular and intraflagellar cargo transport can range from 2 – 20 (Hirokawa et al.,
260 2009b; Rai et al., 2016; Siddiqui and Straube, 2017; Prevo et al., 2017), and in the
261 sarcomere more than 50 muscle myosins can engage during muscle contraction (Spudich,
262 2014). In order to expand the capabilities to understand the molecular motor ensembles in
263 this study we have designed and validated a 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold. The
264 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold also acts as a cargo mimic, where the cargo-motor
265 linkers are amenable for varying degrees of flexibility. Therefore, the 6HB-400nm DNA
266 origami scaffold described here offers versatility to study molecular motor ensembles up
267 to 28 molecules.

268
269 Using 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold as a cargo, we tethered them with the KIF1A
270 motors with varying ensemble motor numbers and linker flexibilities. From our assays
271 we show that the biochemical properties of the KIF1A motors does not get affected as
272 evident from the velocity and processivity values between rigid and flexible linkers.
273 However, a striking observation emerged from these assays is the inability of KIF1A
274 monomer ensembles to initiate motility when tethered to 6HB-400nm with flexible
275 linkers (Figure 3 and 4). We also unequivocally show that the effects of flexible linkers
276 can be reversed by the addition of oligonucleotides that are complementary to the flexible

277 single-strand DNA linkers i.e., the flexible linkers (Figure 3 and 4). We attribute the
278 mechanism of diminished microtubule-binding of KIF1A ensembles with flexible linkers
279 to its autoinhibited state mediated by the K-loop. In the case where the 6HB-400nm
280 KIF1A monomer ensembles tethered with flexible oligonucleotides, the motor domain
281 can adopt several degrees of conformation with respect to the 6HB-400nm scaffold. This
282 might be conducive for an electrostatic interaction between the negatively charged DNA
283 strands of 6HB-400nm and the positively charged K-loop of KIF1A motor domain. Upon
284 addition of the rescue oligonucleotides complementary to the flexible regions the
285 persistence of the linkers decreases. Thus, the motor domain may remain with a restricted
286 degree of conformational flexibility and no electrostatic interaction between K-loop and
287 6HB-400nm DNA elements.

288

289 The K-loop of kinesin-3 motors is a unique element that has been shown to enhance the
290 processivity among this subfamily of kinesin motors (Soppina and Verhey, 2014). This is
291 mediated by the electrostatic interaction with the acidic carboxy-terminal tails of alpha-
292 and beta-tubulins. Therefore, it is conceivable that such an electrostatic interaction
293 between K-loop and other acidic elements might sterically interfere with microtubule
294 interaction. However, such an involvement of K-loop towards autoinhibitory regulation
295 of kinesin-3 motors has so far not been described. Indeed, the autoinhibitory effects
296 observed between the K-loop of KIF1A and DNA elements of 6HB-400nm scaffold are
297 of non-physiological nature. However, a stretch of acidic amino acids is present in the
298 coiled-coil regions of kinesin-3 motors that can mediate such an electrostatic interaction.
299 Additionally, the MAP mediated regulation of kinesin-3 family motors might also
300 involve such an electrostatic interaction (Monroy et al., 2020). Dimerization of kinesin-3
301 motors has been proposed to be an important regulatory step for their motility (Soppina et
302 al., 2014; Al-Bassam et al., 2003; Patel et al., 2021; Siddiqui and Straube, 2017;
303 Hammond et al., 2009). Since multimerization of kinesin-3 monomers can also lead to
304 intracellular cargo transport (Schimert et al., 2019), here we propose an additional tier of
305 autoinhibitory regulation of kinesin-3 motors mediated by the K-loop. Autoinhibition of
306 motors by the cargo domain is a common feature among kinesin family motors (Sweeney
307 and Holzbaur, 2018). In this study using DNA origami and ensemble motors we have

308 illuminated an autoinhibition mechanism that was not described previously. Further
309 underscoring the power of studying motors in ensembles and the importance of the 6HB-
310 400nm DNA origami scaffold developed in this study.

311

312 **Materials and Methods**

313 **Protein Purification**

314 Truncated Rat KIF1A (1-393 amino acids, dimer) followed by a GCN4 leucine zipper
315 and Rat KIF1A (1-369 amino acids, monomer) was cloned into a pET-17b vector with a
316 SNAP-tag followed by a 10X Histidine-tag at the carboxy-terminus. All the KIF1A gene
317 constructs were expressed using the BL21(DE3) bacterial expression system.

318 Transformed cells were grown at 37°C to 0.D 0.4-0.6 followed by induction with 0.5mM
319 IPTG and overnight shaking at 18°C. Cells were harvested and lysed in Buffer-A
320 containing 25mM pipes, pH 6.8, 100mM KCl, 5mM MgCl₂, 5mM β-mercaptoethanol,
321 30mM imidazole. The supernatant was loaded onto a Ni-NTA column, followed by a
322 high salt wash (Buffer-A with 300mM KCl, 200μM ATP) followed by elution using
323 Buffer-A with 350mM imidazole. Pure proteins were obtained by further subjecting the
324 Ni-NTA elute to size exclusion chromatography using an S200 16/1600 column (GE)
325 with Buffer-A.

326

327 **Preparation of Benzyl Guanine-labeled oligo**

328 Benzyl-guanine NHS ester (BG-GLA-NHS; NEB S2040) was covalently linked to the
329 C7-amine modified oligonucleotide (Sigma), LPAH2 (see Supplementary Table 1).
330 Briefly, 2mM LPAH2 (purchased from Sigma), was mixed with 20mM BG-NHS
331 (dissolved in DMSO) in a molar ratio of 1:30 in the presence of 65mM HEPES pH 8.6
332 and incubated at 37°C with constant stirring overnight. The mixture was subjected to
333 speed vacuum to get rid of the DMSO and further reconstituted in water. BG-labelled
334 oligo was separated from excess BG-NHS and unlabeled oligo by subjecting this mixture
335 to reverse phase HPLC using C18 column. Briefly, 100uL of the oligonucleotide mixture
336 was injected into a clarity 5u oligo RP column (Phenomenex 00B-4442-E0) and was
337 subjected to an increasing gradient of acetonitrile starting from 5% to 35% in 0.5M
338 TEAA in 30 minutes. The NH₂-oligo and the BG-labeled oligo were separated during

339 this elution. Labeling was confirmed by mass spectrometric analysis. The BG-labeled
340 oligonucleotide peak was collected, speed vacuumed, and further purified using obtained
341 ethanol precipitation.

342

343 **Labelling Kinesin with Benzyl-Guanine oligonucleotide (BG-oligonucleotide)**

344 SNAP-tagged KIF1A proteins were incubated with a 2X molar excess of BG-labeled
345 oligonucleotide at room temperature for 15 minutes followed by overnight incubation at
346 4°C. The removal of excess BG- oligonucleotide from the reaction was achieved by
347 subjecting the motor to Microtubule-binding and its release in the presence of ATP.
348 Active BG-labeled oligonucleotide motors obtained were flash frozen as 5uL aliquots and
349 stored at -80°C. In case of dimeric kinesin, excess BG-oligo removal was achieved by
350 another round of Ni-NTA purification. Labeling efficiency was assessed by a 10% SDS-
351 PAGE gel as labeled protein showed a distinct gel shift (Supplementary Figure 3).

352

353 **6HB-400nm DNA origami structure preparation**

354 The 6HB-400nm structure was modified from a previously published structure (Bui et al.,
355 2010). The sequences of all staple strands, and anti-handle stands are given in the
356 Supplementary Table 1. 10nM m13mp18 ssDNA (NEB S4040) were mixed with 100nM
357 core staples and 500nM handle staples to a total volume of 50uL in 1X folding buffer
358 (40mM Tris, 20mM acetic acid, 1mM EDTA, 12.5mM MgCl₂, pH 8.0), followed by
359 annealing in a PCR machine as follows: 90°C for 10 minutes, then cooled to 65°C with
360 1°C per minute, then further cooled to 10°C with 1°C per minute. The folded 6HB were
361 purified from excess staples using Amicon centriprep column.

362

363 **Motility and rigor assays**

364 Typically, a 5uL aliquot of 6HB-400nm (~2nM) was mixed with 2uL of BG-labeled
365 oligonucleotide kinesin (~1uM) and incubated for 1 hour at RT and subsequently in ice
366 for the duration of the assay. Successful formation of motor-6HB complex was assessed
367 by 1% agarose gel where complexes showed graded retardation in mobility with
368 increasing number of motors in the complex (Figure 1 and Supplementary Figure 3).
369 Biotinylated-CY5-labelled Microtubules were attached onto an acid washed glass surface

370 using biotin-streptavidin chemistry. 0.9 μ L of motility mixture (motor-6HB-400nm
371 complex in 1XBRB80 containing 1mg/mL Casein and 20 μ M Taxol, 2.5mM PCA, 50nM
372 PCD, 50nM Trolox and 2mM ATP) was added to the motor-6HB-400nm complex and
373 flowed onto the motility chamber containing microtubules. In the case of rigor
374 experiments, ATP was omitted from the motility mixture. For rescue experiments,
375 respective oligonucleotides as indicated was added to the motor:6HB-400nm mixture, for
376 detailed information regarding the sequence of oligonucleotides see Supplementary
377 Table1. Single-molecule motility of DNA-motor complex was imaged using a Nikon Ti-2
378 microscope (1.49 N.A., 100x objective) using total internal reflection microscopy (TIRF);
379 images were acquired with a Hamamatsu sCMOS camera and NIS Elements software at
380 1-5Hz intervals. Velocities were calculated using kymograph analysis in ImageJ software
381 and Fiesta software.

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- 488

489 **Figure Legends**

490 **Figure 1: Characterization of 400nm-6HB DNA origami as motor cargo scaffold. A.**

491 Cartoon representation of 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold used in this study as
492 illustrated. 28 handle sites are located in the helix 2 as a single file and three fluorescent
493 handles are located each in helix 1 and 5. **B.** Negative stained electron micrograph of
494 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold. Scale bar = 50nm. **C.** Agarose gel shift assays for
495 6HB-400nm scaffold with and without KIF1A dimers for varying handle sites as marked.
496 **D.** Representative kymographs of KIF1A 1-393 SNAP-647 (grey) and 6HB-400nm 28H
497 KIF1A 1-393 SNAP ensemble motors (blue) moving on microtubules. Scale bar = 5 μ m
498 and 10 seconds. **E.** Velocity and processivity histograms of KIF1A 1-393 SNAP-647 (in
499 grey) and 6HB-400nm 16H KIF1A 1-393 SNAP ensemble (in blue) motors. The average
500 velocity of KIF1A 1-393 SNAP-647 are $1.27 \pm 0.39 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$, n=100 6HB-400nm 16H
501 KIF1A 1-393 SNAP ensembles are $1.08 \pm 0.29 \mu\text{m s}^{-1}$, n=91. The average run length of
502 KIF1A 1-393 SNAP-647 are 3.36 μ m and 6HB-400nm 16H KIF1A 1-393 SNAP
503 ensembles are 9.8 μ m. n represents the number of motor particles analyzed.

504

505 **Figure 2: KIF1A dimer versus monomer ensemble motility. A.** Average velocity data
506 of 6HB-400nm 4-28H KIF1A monomer ensembles with flexible and rigid
507 oligonucleotides and KIF1A dimer ensembles with rigid oligonucleotides. **B.** Average
508 processivity values of 6HB-400nm 4-28H KIF1A ensembles as described in A. Error bars
509 represent the standard error of the mean from three independent experiments. For
510 individual values see Supplementary Table 2.

511

512 **Figure 3: Microtubule-binding of KIF1A ensembles with varying linkers.**

513 Microtubule-binding of 6HB-400nm 8H KIF1A monomer ensembles with varying
514 linkers as indicated and illustrated. The microtubules are shown in magenta and the 6HB-
515 400nm KIF1A 8H in cyan. In each microtubule-binding experiment, a rescue reaction
516 was performed (marked as rescue), where an oligonucleotide that is complementary to the
517 flexible parts of linkers was added to the mixture. For more details regarding the
518 sequences of linkers and rescue oligonucleotides see Supplementary Table 1. Scale bar =
519 5 μ m.

520

521 **Figure 4: Motility properties of KIF1A ensembles with varying linkers. A.**

522 Representative kymographs of 6HB-400nm 4-28H KIF1A monomer ensembles with

523 flexible and flexible-rescue oligonucleotides. Scale bar = 5 μ m and 10 seconds. **B.**

524 Average landing frequency rates for 6HB-400nm 4H, 8H and 16H KIF1A monomer

525 ensembles with flexible linkers and rescue oligonucleotides as indicated. Error bars

526 represent the standard error of the mean from three independent experiments.

527

528 **Supplementary Figure 1: Illustration of DNA scaffold with protein attachment and**

529 **fluorescent handle sites. A.** Arrangement of m13mp18 single-stranded DNA as 6HB-

530 400nm DNA origami scaffold. The helices and corresponding base number are as

531 indicated. **B & C.** Zoomed in view of two distal end of 6HB-400nm DNA origami

532 scaffold as color coded in A. The m13mp18 strand and the complementary staple oligos

533 are marked as wavy lines in light and dark grey respectively. The fluorescent handle

534 extensions are indicated as red arrows. The helices, column number and handle numbers

535 (H1, H2, H3...H26, H27 & H28) and nucleotide base resolution are as indicated.

536

537 **Supplementary Figure 2: Folding and validation of 400nm-6HB handle occupancy.**

538 **A.** Agarose gel of m13mp18 scaffold (pre-folding lane), folded reaction of 400nm-6HB

539 (post-folding lane) and 6HB-400nm after removing the excess oligonucleotides (post-

540 purification lane). The is marked as 6hb and the size of ladder as indicated. **B.** Agarose

541 gel of 6HB-400nm with varying handle numbers incubated Cy3-labelled anti-handle

542 oligonucleotides as indicated, and the same gel was imaged under Cy3 and SYBR (UV)

543 channel. **C.** Agarose gel of 6HB-400nm with varying handle numbers incubated Cy3-

544 labelled anti-handle oligonucleotides as indicated. To rule out effects of the SYBR green,

545 the experiments were performed without SYBR. The same gel was imaged under Cy3

546 and SYBR (UV) channel. **D.** Mean fold increase in Cy3 fluorescence as a function of

547 handle number present in the 6HB-400nm DNA origami scaffold. Error bars represent

548 the standard error of the mean from three independent experiments.

549

550 **Supplementary Figure 3: Engineering kinesins for DNA attachment. A.** Cartoon
551 representation of KIF1A motors tagged with oligonucleotides using benzyl-guanine and
552 SNAP tag method. **B.** SDS-PAGE gel of KIF1A monomer and dimer before and after
553 tagged with flexible and rigid anti-handle oligonucleotides as indicated. The white, red
554 and yellow asterisks denote KIF1A unconjugated, KIF1A conjugated with rigid and
555 flexible oligonucleotides respectively. **C.** Illustration of 6HB-400nm DNA origami
556 scaffold with flexible, rigid and intermediate motor linkers as indicated. For details
557 regarding the sequences of oligonucleotides see Supplementary Table 1. **D.** Agarose gel
558 shift assays for 6HB-400nm scaffold with and without KIF1A monomer ensembles for
559 the 8H used in Figure 3 rigor experiments. **E. & F.** Agarose gel shift assays for 6HB-
560 400nm scaffold with and without KIF1A monomers with varying handle sites for flexible
561 and rigid linkers as marked.

562

563 **Supplementary Figure 4: Kymographs of KIF1A ensemble motility.** Representative
564 kymographs of KIF1A ensembles with flexible and rigid anti-handle oligonucleotides, for
565 the data shown in Figure 2 as indicated. Scale bar = 5 μ m and 10 seconds.

566

567 **Supplementary Figure 5: Velocity and run length histograms of KIF1A ensemble**
568 **motility.** Velocity and processivity histograms of 6HB-400nm 4-28H KIF1A monomer
569 and dimer ensembles. Data for KIF1A monomer ensembles with flexible, rigid and
570 KIF1A dimer ensembles with rigid anti-handle oligonucleotides are shown as indicated.

571

572 **Supplementary Figure 6: Microtubule binding of KIF1A 16H ensembles.**

573 Microtubule-binding of 6HB-400nm 16H KIF1A monomer ensembles with varying
574 linkers as indicated and illustrated. The microtubules are shown in magenta and the 6HB-
575 400nm KIF1A ensembles in cyan. In each microtubule-binding experiment, a rescue
576 reaction was perfumed (marked as rescue), where an oligonucleotide that is
577 complimentary to the flexible parts of linkers was added to the mixture. For more details
578 regarding the sequences of linkers and rescue oligonucleotides see Supplementary Table
579 1. Scale bar = 5 μ m.

580

581 **Supplementary Figure 7: Histograms and kymographs of KIF1A ensembles with**
582 **flexible and rescue linkers. A.** Velocity and processivity histograms of 6HB-400nm 4-
583 28H KIF1A monomer ensembles with flexible and flexible-rescue oligonucleotides, for
584 the data shown in Figure 4.

585

586 **Supplementary Movie 1:** KIF1A 8H ensembles with rigid, flexible and flexible with
587 rescue oligonucleotides as indicated. Scale bar = 5 μ m and time in minutes/seconds
588 (mm:ss format) as indicated.

589

590

591

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600 **Author Contribution**

601 P.L and M.S designed the work. P.L performed the experiments and analyzed the data.
602 M.S supervised the work and wrote the paper.

603

604 **Competing interests**

605 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

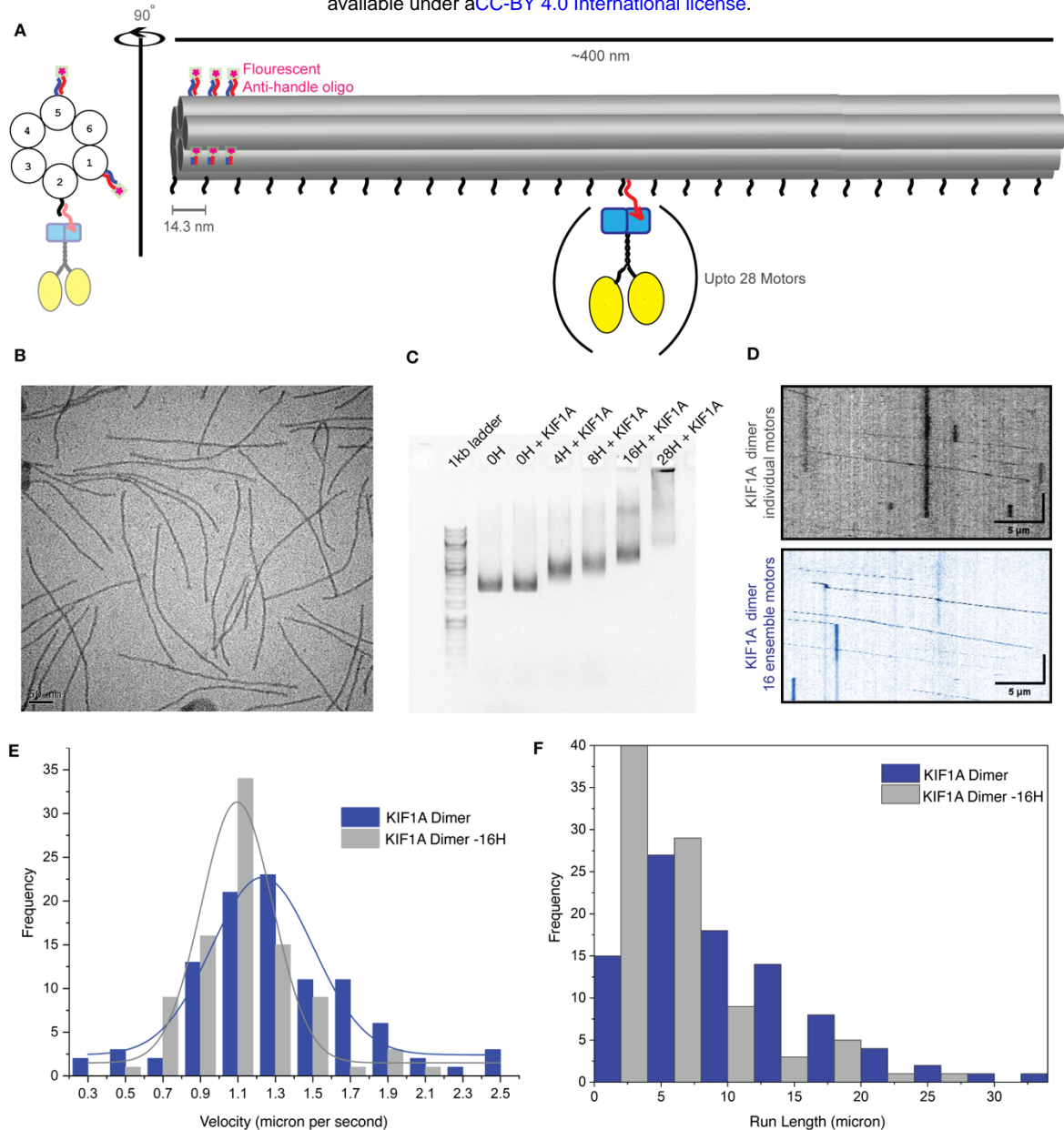


Figure 1: Characterization of 400nm-6HB DNA origami as motor cargo scaffold.

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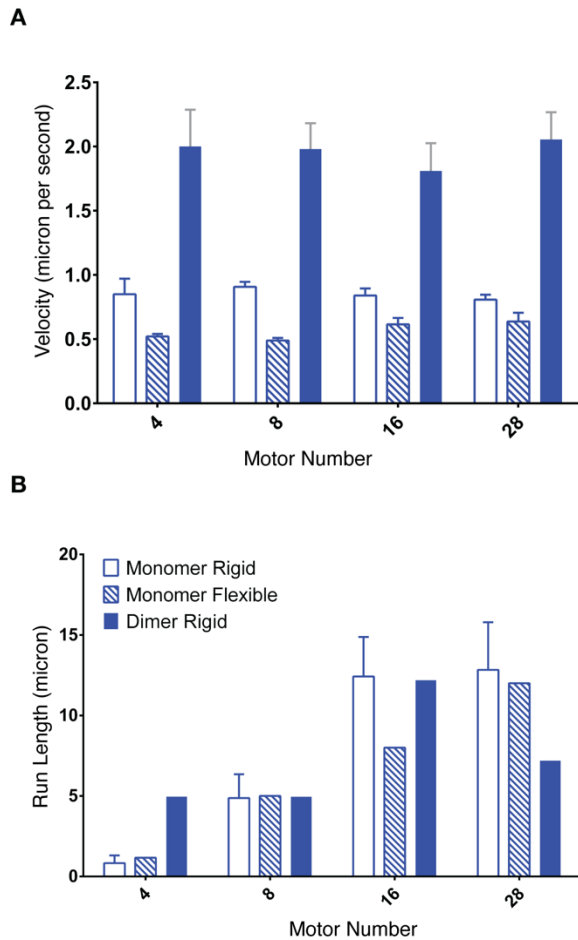


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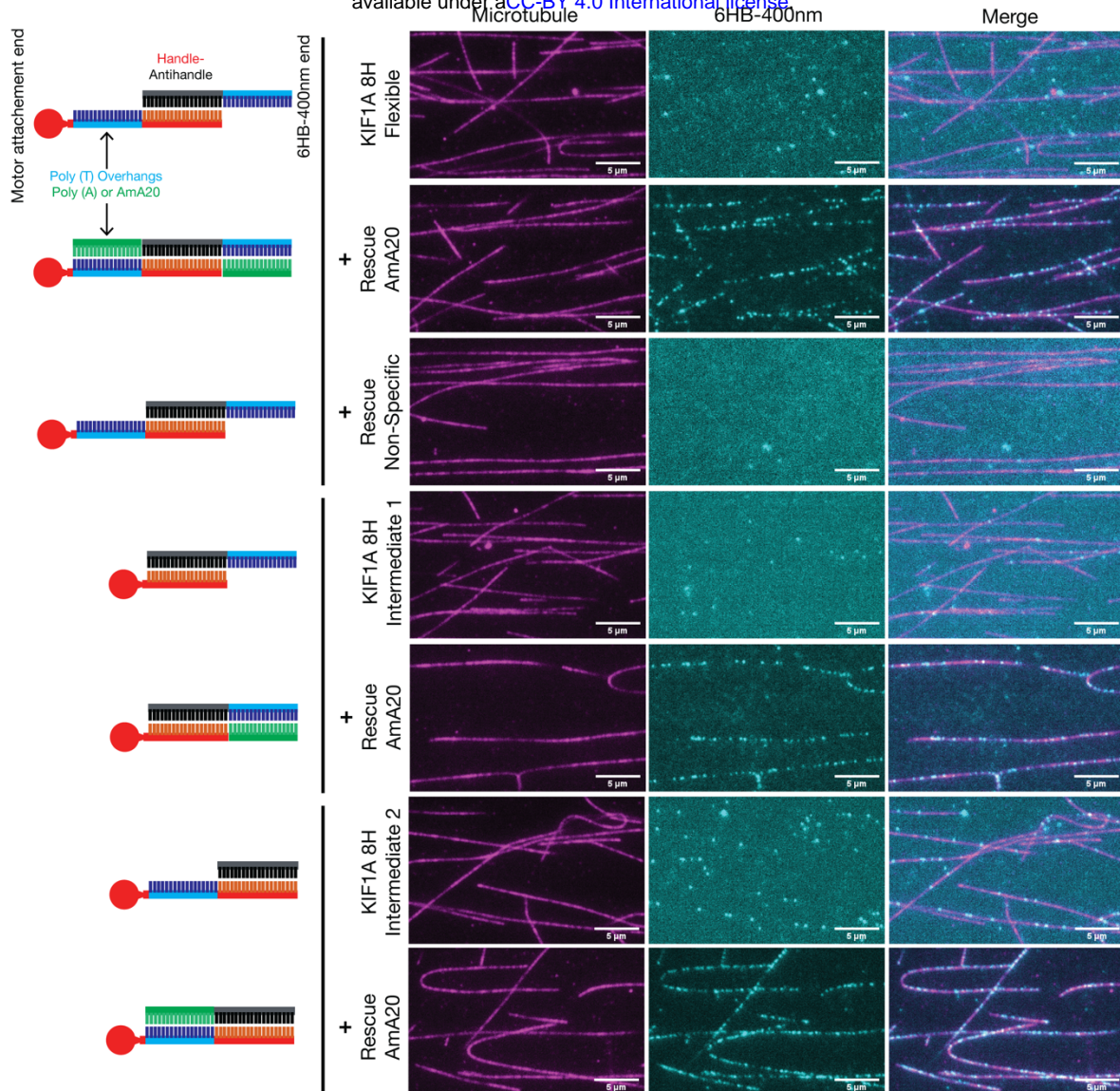


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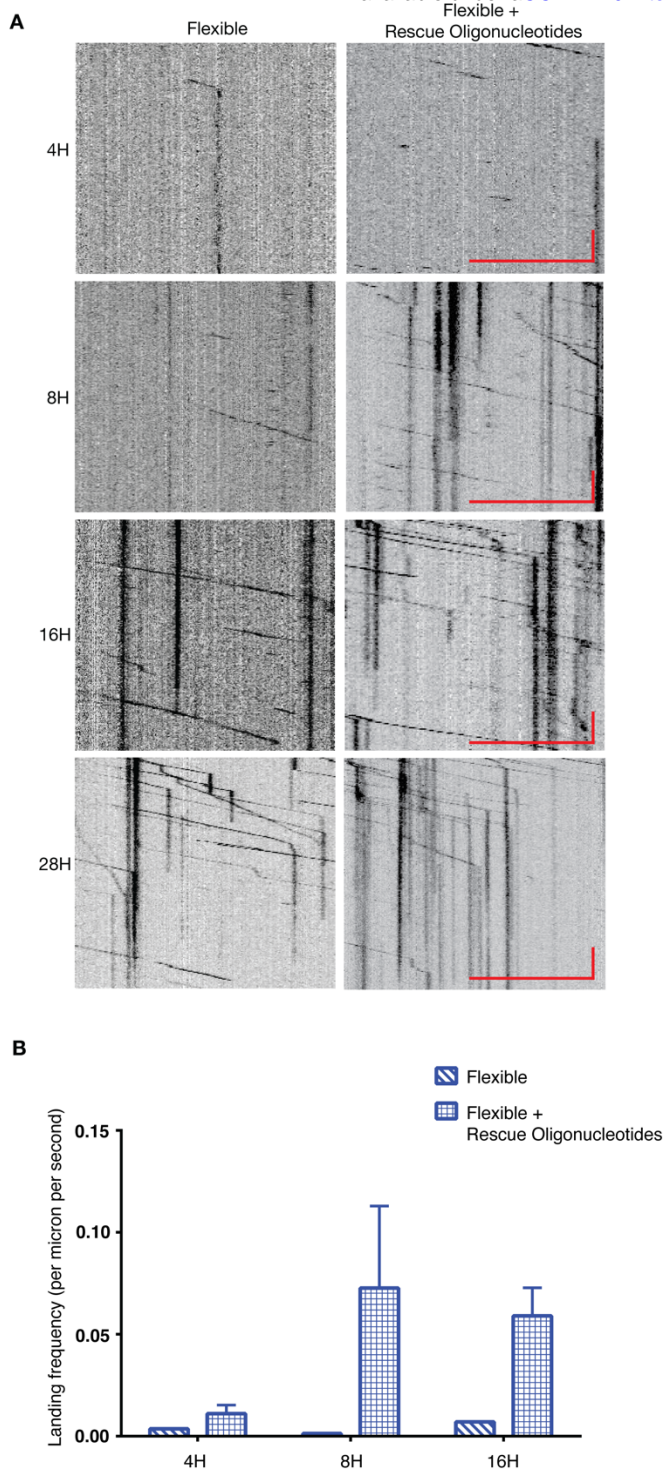
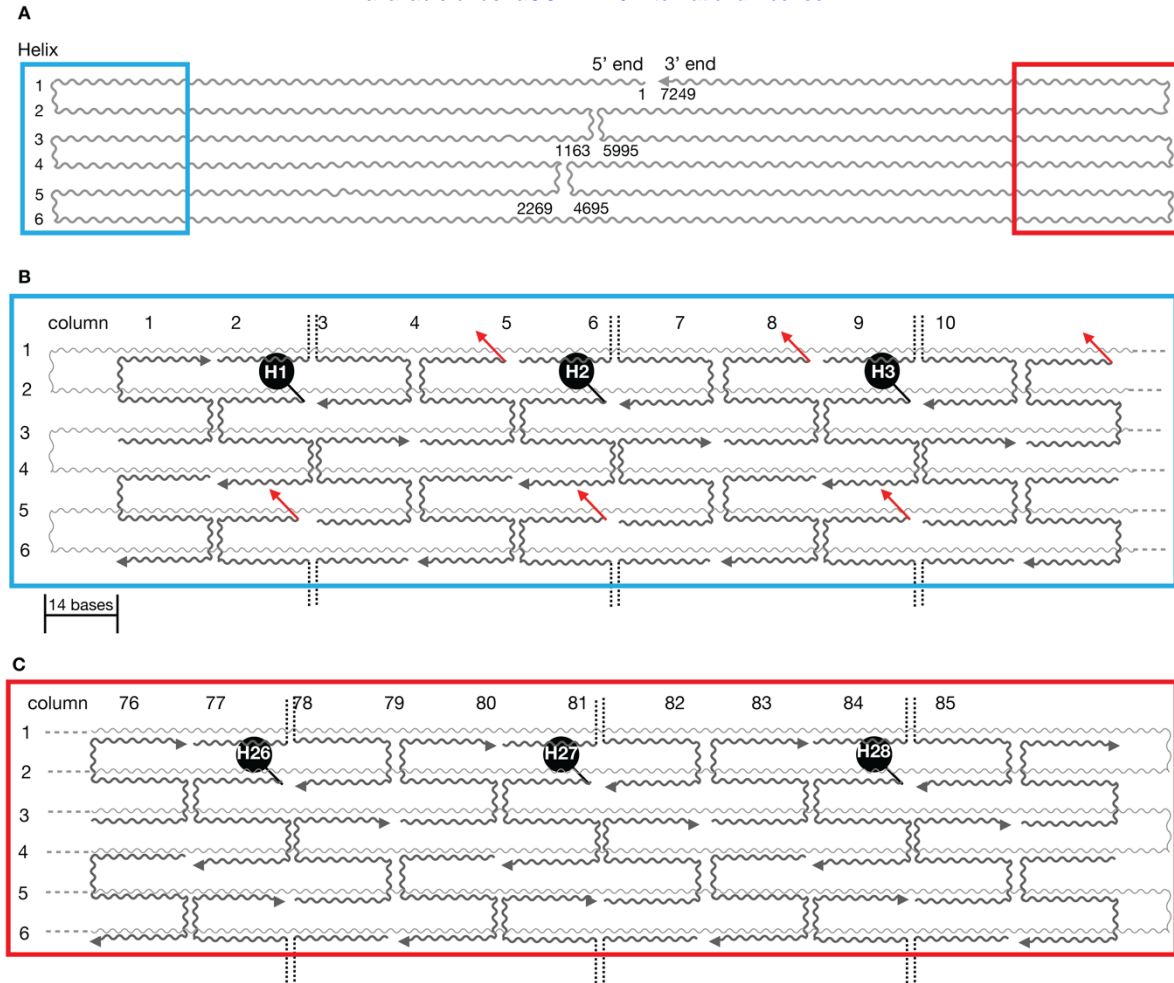
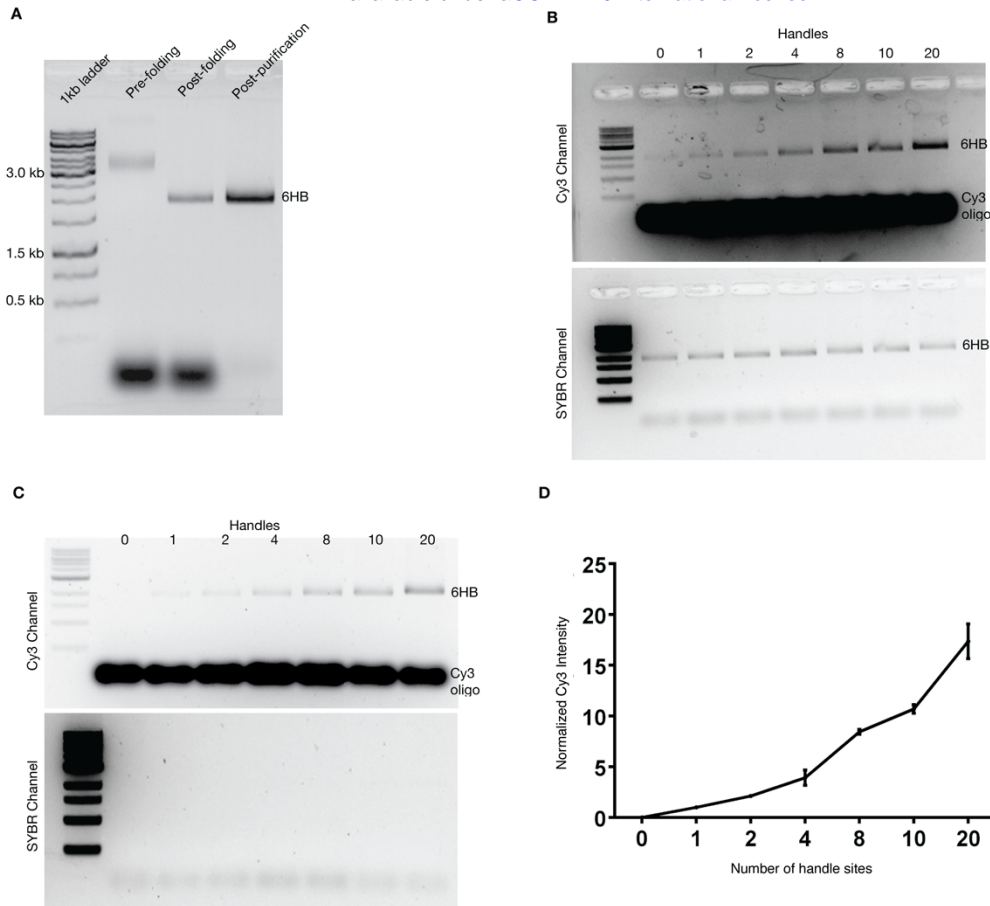


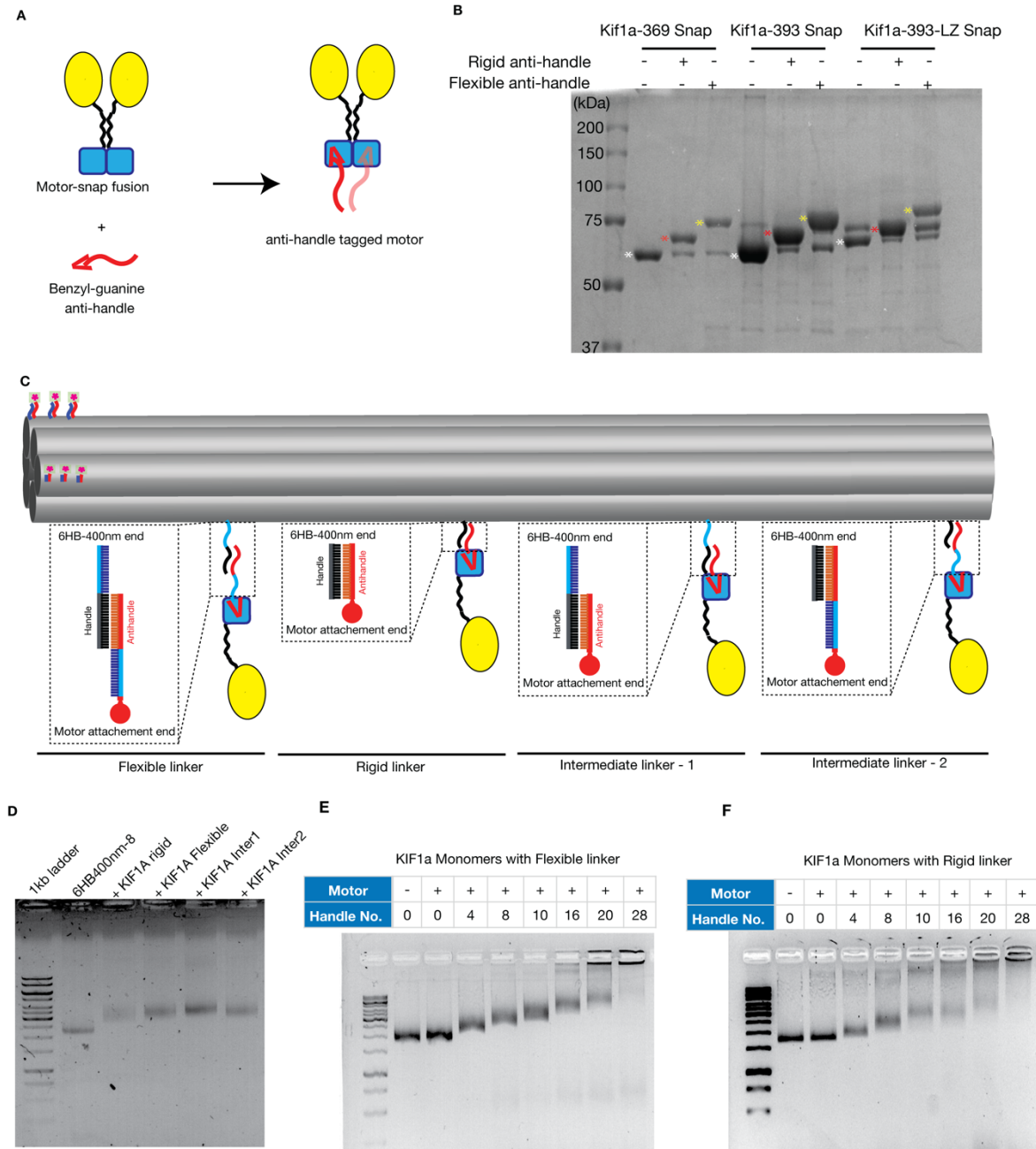
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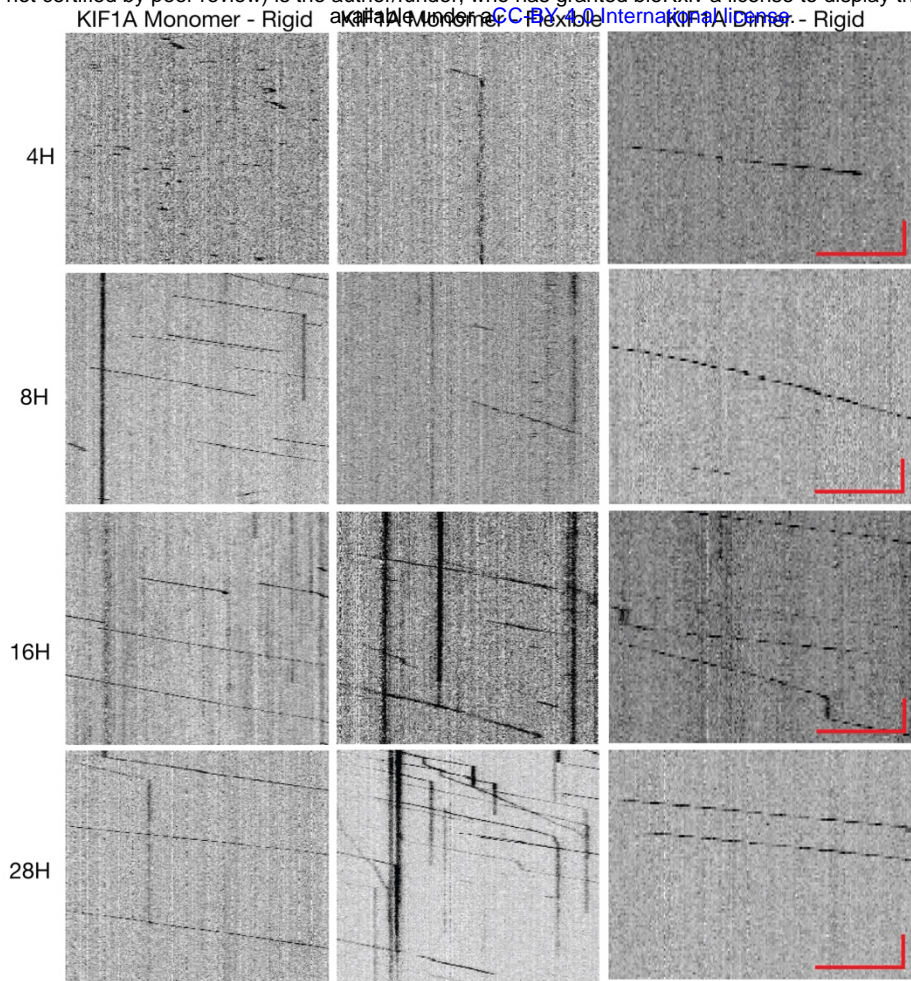
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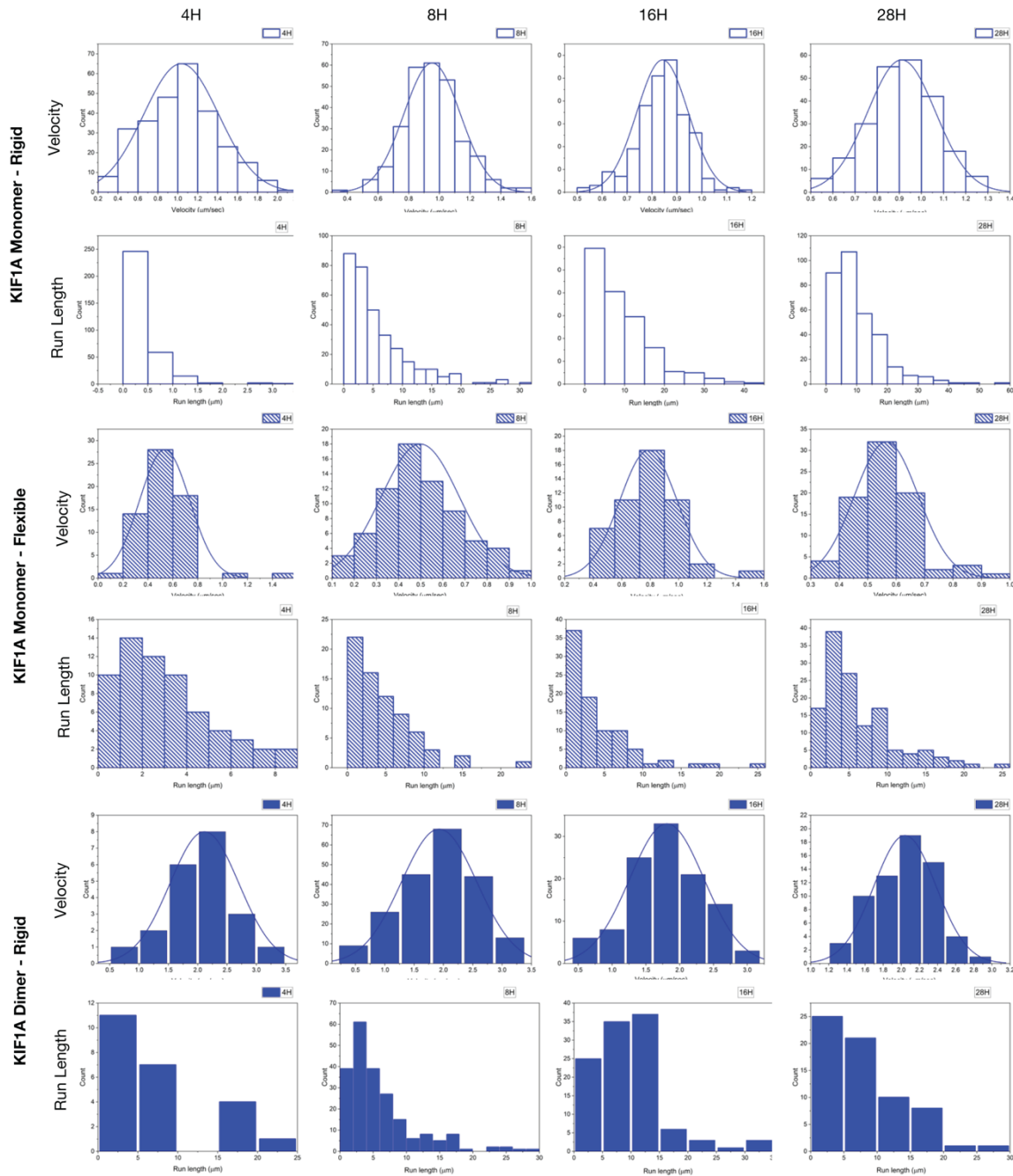
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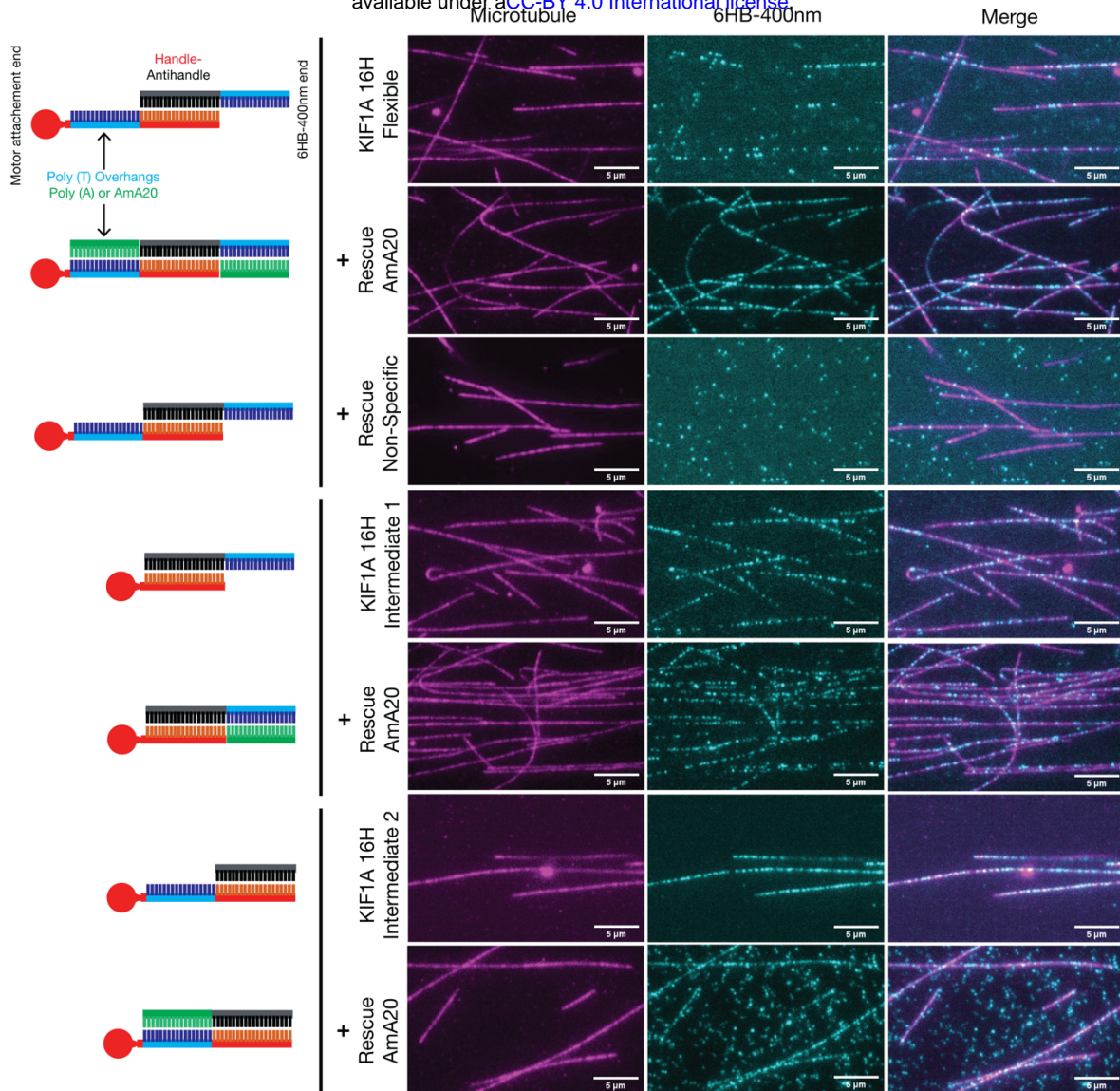
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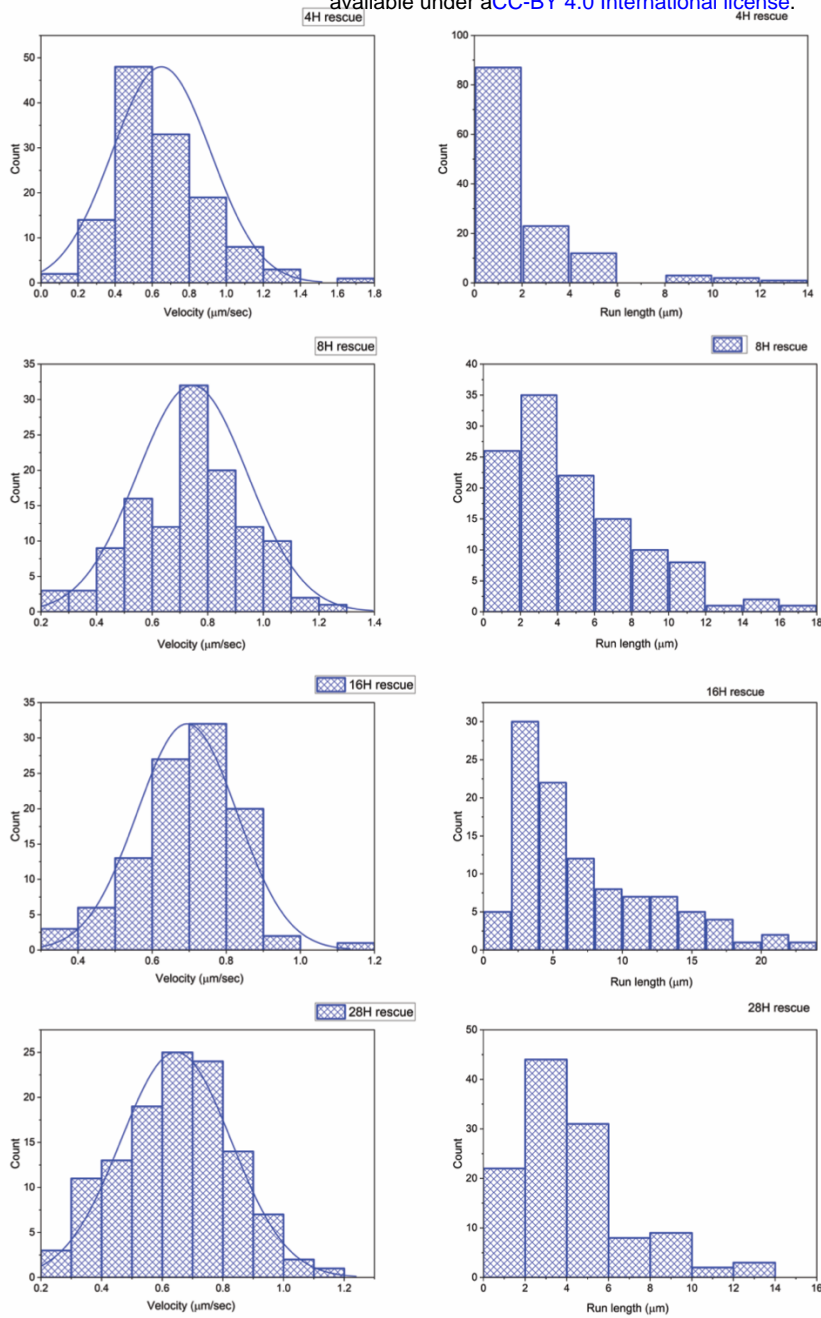


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Supplementary Figure 6: Microtubule binding of KIF1A 16H ensembles.

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